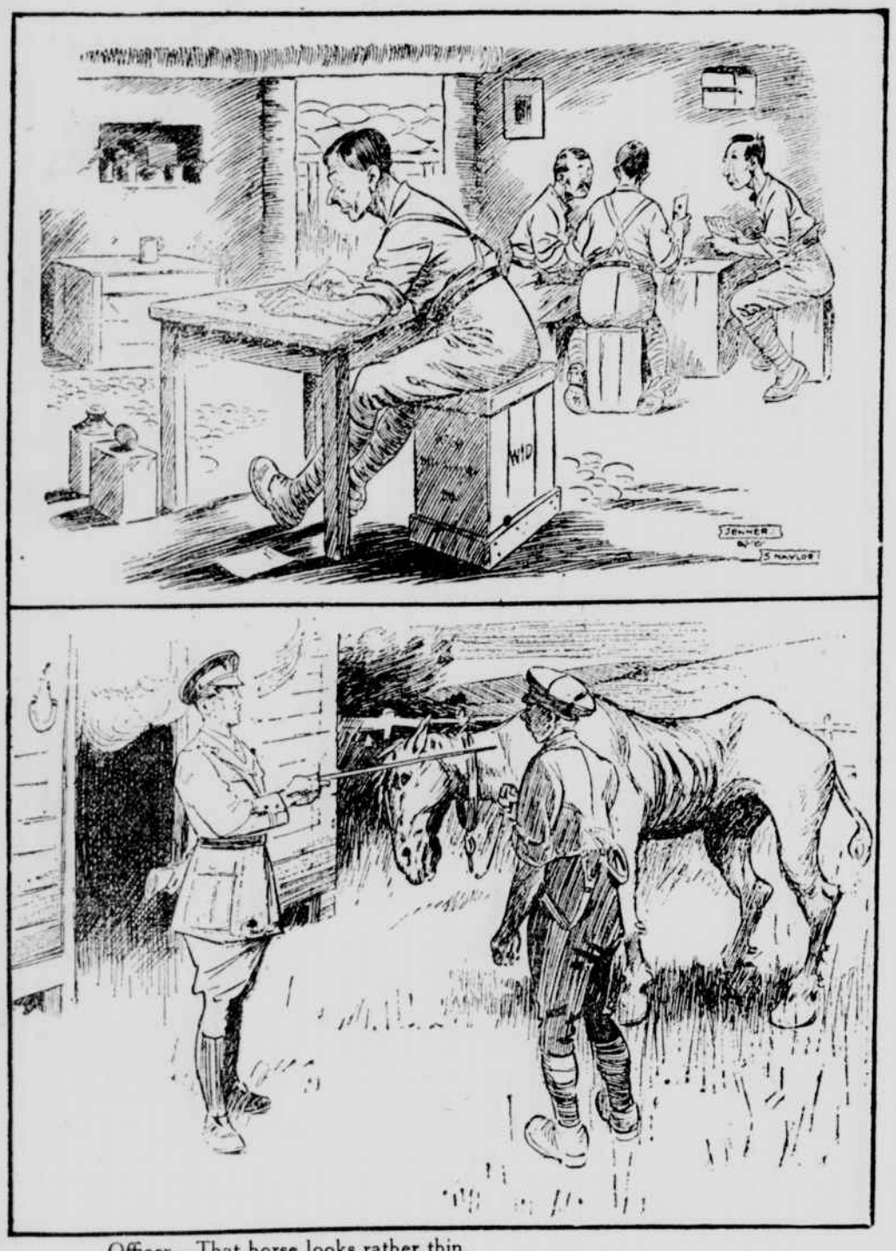
Humorists, with Busy Pen, See the Brighter Side of Wa

"Dear Mother—Please send me 'The Sunday Christian' and five shillings. Don't forget 'The Sunday Christian'!"



Officer—That horse looks rather thin.
R. F. A. Driver—Yessir; but it's not been watered yet, sir.
—From *Blighty*.

Official Reports from the Front

—From *Blighty*.

The Artist—Then

—And Now
—From *The Bystander*.

Rice May Become an Important American War Food

POSSIBLY at the point of the bayonet, as any number of solicitous gentlemen already have inferred, the eating habits of the United States will now undergo a change. With the future of the world depending very largely on how much wheat the average man can restrain himself from eating, it will not be strange to find that other foods have been discovered to be quite as palatable as wheat, fully as nourishing and perhaps just at the present moment not so precious.

Doubtless one of these foods will be rice. The Department of Agriculture places rice higher than corn, wheat or oats in the amount of nutrition contained, figures its food energy as three times as great as its weight in potatoes and more than twice that of fat beef. It has a higher heat producing power than rye, barley or wheat and far more than white bread or beefsteak. Frank G. Carpenter, who shows an expert knowledge of the subject, writes thus of the rice fields of Louisiana in "The New Orleans Times-Picayune":

Lake Charles is surrounded by thousands of acres of rice fields, and the territory tributary to it is now growing more than a million sacks of rice every year. Just now the rice is standing high out of the water, like countless emeralds sprouting out of a basin of silver. There are great beds of these emeralds all the way from here to the Mississippi River, and they extend westward and southward along the Gulf of Mexico to below the Brazos River, in Texas. They are part of the great rice farm which runs along the flat Louisiana prairies above the Gulf of Mexico and extends far down into Texas.

The Gulf strip of rice land is four or five hundred miles long and from twenty to fifty miles wide, and it is now producing a large part of the crop of the United States. Its area can be greatly extended and can be made to include much of the land running northward from here to Arkansas.

In the Arkansas prairies there are other rice lands which yield even more to the acre than those of the Gulf; and within the past five years a big rice industry has sprung up in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys, in California. In 1912 the rice of California had not yet come into the market. During that year a strip of 1,400 acres was planted near Biggs, in the Sacramento Valley. It succeeded so well that in 1913 6,000 acres were planted, and they yielded more than 3,000 pounds of rice to the acre. In 1914 the area jumped to 16,000 acres, and last year it covered 69,000 acres. In 1916 the rice crop of California alone was more than 100,000,000 pounds. It was equal to one pound for every man, woman and child in the United States, or enough to supply twelve meals for each of our citizens.

But what of rice as a war ration, Mr. Carpenter asks:

How warm will it keep the soldiers in the trenches and how much work can one do on such a diet? I have been in Manchuria in winter. It is bitterly cold, and there is nowhere that one needs more food to keep warm. Nevertheless, it was upon a diet of rice and fish that the Japanese soldiers endured all their hardships and succeeded in defeating the meat-fed Cossacks from Russia. Every soldier in the Japanese army had a little lacquered tin case about as big as an old-fashioned cartridge box. This contained a pound or so of raw rice, and that was sufficient to sustain his life and fighting strength for two or three days. The rice could be cooked anywhere that a fire could be made and water obtained. It was used both in the camps and on the march.

As to the value of rice for our people at home, it is equally good. It forms the chief bread of Asia, and about half of the people of the whole world make it their principal food. The Filipino keeps fat upon rice, and the Chinese coolie works twelve hours a day upon his scanty supply. I have had Japanese jinrikisha men carry me over the country at six miles an hour, running all day, on nothing but rice, and I have seen Corean porters carrying loads of 300 pounds on the same food.

Mr. Carpenter describes the rice harvest in Southern Louisiana as being very much like the wheat harvest in the Northwest.

The rice turns yellow and the sheaves look like wheat. The thrashing is done in about the same way. The machines go from farm to farm, and a single thrasher will handle as much as 2,000 acres per day. In the thrashing the paddy, or rice grain in the husk, flows forth at the side of the machine, while the straw is blown out through a pipe at one end. The paddy is caught in bags, each of which holds about 200 pounds, and it is in this shape that it is carried on wagons or boats to the warehouse or mill.

It will not be any stranger than the war itself if one of its effects will be to fill with waving stalks of rice thousands of lowland acres that are now unused.

The Erie Canal Has a Birthday

THIS month the hundredth anniversary of the construction of the Erie Canal is being celebrated. "The great waterway," says State Controller Eugene M. Travis, "has earned the praise of every one who understands its influence in stimulating industry, increasing the wealth of the Empire State and making New York City the metropolis of the world. Its effect upon the growth of the nation as a whole has been tremendous, for the canal soon became the artery of inland travel, its value to Ohio and Michigan being second only to that of New York State itself." Mr. Travis further outlines the history and importance of the canal thus:

"On July 4, 1817, according to a memorial tablet preserved in the State Controller's office, the first spadeful of earth in the construction of this colossal enterprise was turned, and by October 26, 1825, the project was completed. Up to the time of this undertaking, the state had contented itself in the matter of providing transportation facilities by offering slight assistance to private enterprises. Because this method proved inadequate, the government finally took upon itself the building of the canal.

"The suggestion of building the canal to connect the Great Lakes with the Atlantic Ocean was offered as early as 1785 by Washington and others. A survey of the route was made in 1808, but nothing further was accomplished until after the War of 1812. De Witt Clinton was elected Governor in 1816, and one of his first official acts was to create a commission to investigate the project. The result of this investigation led to the enactment of a law creating the Canal Fund and the appointment of a commission which was authorized to borrow money on the credit of the state for this purpose.

"The actual work of construction of the canal proceeded as rapidly as the methods of that time would allow. As soon as each section was completed it was opened to traffic, and by 1821 the first tolls collected amounted to $2,200, this sum exceeding $1,000,000 before 1830.

"The completion of this great waterway soon developed Western New York from a frontier country in which iron and cotton mills multiplied more rapidly than in other sections. It gave an enormous impetus to the growth of the state's industries and laid the foundation of that financial, commercial and manufacturing wealth which has made the name of New York synonymous with the greatest achievements in the world. Up to 1882, when tolls were abolished, over $121,000,000 in revenue had been collected. As the total cost of this waterway, up to that time, was $78,862,000, the state realized a net gain of $42,500,000, and by the time of the undertaking of the new barge canal the old Erie Canal had actually produced over $20,000,000 profit to the state.

"Thus, every statistical measurement applied, whether increase in population, wealth, number of manufacturers, amount of goods transported, growth of cities, agriculture or commerce, all testify to its influence. In fact, the building of this waterway stimulated the development of a wild frontier country and soon built up a great industrial zone across New York State. It made New York State the Empire commonwealth, and New York City the commercial metropolis of the world."

It is interesting to go back and glance at the reports of newspapers of a century past on the opening of the Erie Canal. There is not an abundance of material as a matter of fact. For one reason, there weren't so many newspapers then. October 26, 1825, "The New York Evening Post" is found exulting thus:

"This is the day, and 10 o'clock the hour when the first boat from Lake Erie entered the Grand Canal and proceeded to the City of New York, a distance of 500 miles. All doubt 'The New York Advocate' confesses, are at an end. 'The great work (says he) has been accomplished by the freemen of this state with their own hands, and with their own means and in the fiftieth year of American independence. Those who, in the inception and progress of the work, pronounced it wild and visionary, ruinous and extravagant (and we were the first among the number) now heartily join in exchanging congratulations, and participating in the celebration of its completion. A cold or reluctant admission of error—withering concessions—no fretful or impatient surrender of notions are wrung from the former opponents of the project; but at once open, frank and manly, giving honor and great credit to whom honor and credit are due, and burying hostility in oblivion in the magnanimity of recantation.'

"In 1817 commissioners were appointed to commence the work, and the ground was first broken at Rome, on the 4th day of July of that year. As late as the session of 1819, after many thousand dollars had been expended, a strong effort was made to stop the work, and a large minority of the House of Assembly actually voted against making any further appropriations.

"In 1820 the great loan was authorized with much unanimity, and every obstruction gave way to hardy enterprise and active industry. the forests were levelled—marshes drained—ledges of gigantic rock were torn from their base—the channels of rivers were turned, and on THIS DAY the boats navigate the canal from the Silver Lake, freighted with the products of the district, and proceed to New York, proving beyond a doubt that the Work Is Finished.

"A gun was fired at the Battery, New York, and at Governor's Island agreeably to arrangement, at 19 minutes past 11 o'clock. But why it was fired at that precise time remains to be ascertained, for in 'The Albany Argus' it is stated that the gun will be fired at precisely 11 o'clock, whether any report is heard from above or not." . . .

And in the same paper, two days later, one finds this:

"The sound of the cannon which announced the completion of that greatest work of the age, the Erie Canal, was heard in this city Wednesday at 3 minutes before 11 in the morning. The return fire from New York was heard here at 5 minutes before 12."

Baptizing the Canal on the Day It Was Thrown Open to Commerce
Photo by Brown Brothers.

England's Narrow Diet

THE narrow diet of the Englishman who has little tolerance for myriads of foods upon which other nations subsist is commented upon by "The Spectator" (London), but both the indictment and the suggestions are applicable as well to the American who has too many prejudices against the foods that nature so liberally supplies. "The Spectator" makes this timely study of the bill of fare:

"England's narrow range of daily food has always amazed people from other countries, especially in view of a family expenditure averaging rather higher than anywhere else, unless in the United States. Bread really is the British staff of life—an idealized white loaf, artificially blanched and innutritive, deprived of the elements for muscle toughening and making sound teeth and the bones which make old bones. The variety of cereals used for breadstuffs elsewhere is shortsightedly despised.

"Fruit at breakfast is deemed either a luxury or a fad, even where meat dishes are superabundant on the table. And the vegetables in average weekly use are relatively few and all too often badly cooked, potatoes in particular being spoiled and wasted by being peeled before boiling. An investigator in the 'eighteen-sixties' found out that at least twenty millions' worth of food was then being wasted annually in England by unconscientious and incompetent housewifery. Cornmeal is the best flour for bread and is the most nutrittous. And it is the staple of a palatable pudding, an American national dish.

"Yellow Indian meal makes that excellent porridge, polenta, or yellow meal stirabout, as it is called in Ireland. Some people acquire a taste for it with thick sour milk. Most people prefer it with sweet milk and sugar, or syrup, when these are to be had, and the more people fall back upon what sweet stuff their bees will manufacture and yield up to them the better now.

"As for binding mediums in cookery, a tablespoonful of sago will save two eggs in a pudding otherwise needing three; one duck egg will go as far as two hen eggs. Oat scones and tea cakes are best made with the flour like Scotch oatmeal. All the brown meals—wheat meal, barley meal, rye, buckwheat, even oatmeal—are excellent for puddings with or without some mixture of bread crumbs, but with some baking powder, a little finely chopped beef suet, a few stoned dates or chopped cooking figs, which are most wholesome. Syrup is the proper accompaniment to these puddings, or honey. Dates cooked with rhubarb are a valuable food."

Vegetarians as Patriots

THE social responsibility for food waste is laid by vegetarians at the door of the meat eater. A writer in "Physical Culture" for July calls for the slaughter of male cattle as a means of reducing waste in grain foods. He thus proceeds to make his point:

The United States is a heavy producer of food fats, not only because of her great meat industries, but because of her very considerable output of cottonseed oil. While dietitians dispute the interchangeability of vegetable and animal proteins, it is generally conceded that fat from vegetable sources is dietetically as good as and some contend better than fat from animals.

It takes fat to make nitro-glycerine, but our allies' first call on us is not for dynamite, but for bread. So long as there is actual shortage of grain for human sustenance, and a comparative abundance of food fats in America, it is certainly grossly extravagant to feed so much of our food grains to animals. It requires five or six pounds of grain to produce one pound of beef, and beef averages less than 20 per cent of fat. This means about twenty-five pounds of grain are required to produce one pound of beef fat. Dietetically, a pound of fat is worth two and one-fourth pounds of grain, hence the loss of food value in producing beef fat is in the ratio of 10 to 1.

Because of the more vital need for milk in the diet than for meat, and because as a whole, including its fat, it is the most economical form of converting vegetable foods into animal foods, milk production should not be curtailed until far more desperate straits of food economy are forced upon us than now exist.

The restriction of beef production by the early killing of male cattle seems a war time economy for America, because of its power of saving grain. Yet we need have no fear of a beef famine, for the steers that may be fed from roughage and meat from cows and calves produced as a byproduct of the dairy industry, together with our milk, poultry, pork and fish, will adequately supply the requirements.

Speculation in Wool

SOME criticism has been made of high prices asked the government for woollen cloth for the army and navy, and there is more or less talk about an investigation of these prices. They are very much higher than those paid for the same material in December, 1916. It does not seem as if this investigation would make any great difference, for, based on fundamental conditions, these prices seem absolutely justifiable. Manufacturing costs, which include coal, labor and many others, have greatly increased since six months ago. An investigation might help the situation by driving out undesirable sellers and showing others the way to more economical management and greater coöperation.

Foreign markets are in great need of cotton goods owing to the decline in production abroad, and consequently outside buyers are turning more and more to domestic producers. This accumulation of demand, which is world-wide, will tend to hold the cotton goods market and prevent any great decline in operations for any extended time. Domestic consumption of cotton goods for ordinary purposes is smaller than formerly, but it is more than counteracted by very large buying for special purposes. It is not likely that the demand upon manufacturers will be less for a long time, but unless this big demand is handled carefully it may bring speculation. Speculation is liable to produce exceptional prices, and from any high point a more radical decline can take place than if quotations were relatively nearer the actual cost of production. In order to maintain steadiness in the situation and to aid the export trade, manufacturers should keep prices relatively low and accept contracts at profits which might be considered moderate as compared with those which are being obtained. Cotton has advanced relatively much more than many fabrics, but exceptional profits are being made and some manufacturers tend toward forcing prices still higher.

The wool trade generally feels that by adherence to the "no speculation" slogan of Mr. Hoover they can coöperate with the government and voluntarily keep prices down to a non-speculative basis.—*American Wool and Cotton Reporter.*

Swine Feeding in Spain

In Western Spain certain lands covered with oaks are utilized for pig feeding. Toward the middle of autumn, when the pastures begin to get poor and the acorns begin to ripen, the feeding process begins. The forest is usually divided into four parts and the acorns knocked from the trees in the low-lying quarter first, then the second, about two weeks later, and so on, the pigs indicating their hunger by signs known to their guardians.

European Water Tra portation

Water transportation in Europe is m expensive than rail transportation. In 1905, for instance, the waterways of Pr sia showed a deficit of $3,523 a mile, w the railways yielded a net profit of $1 for every mile. The Prussian governm consequently, uses the railroad profit offset the waterway deficit.

None of the canals of Europe and few of the rivers serve economically carriers of traffic.